

Strengthening Community-based Disaster Preparedness in East Asia and the Pacific Region



Strengthen local capacities in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) region for disaster preparedness and regularly monitor and evaluate the work. The former readily provokes a desire to act, perhaps more than the latter, though both are necessary to be most effective. Moreover, strengthening local capacities can include activities aimed at integrating social inclusion factors systematically, building networks of actors, conducting longer-term programming, and more. Regular monitoring and evaluation can support continued quality and improvement of programs.

The EAP region has experienced an increase in disasters due to natural causes over the past decade. USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) utilizes its Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) programs to serve at-risk communities, preparing them for such disaster events. In its evaluation of CBDRM programming from 2014 to 2023, the Purdue Policy Research Institute (PPRI) and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

PPRI and ADPC utilized quantitative and qualitative data analyses to address three sets of questions:

- Has programming resulted in sustainable outcomes which have increased local capacity to better prepare for disasters and reduce the impacts?
- Have there been decreases in disaster-related impacts from CBDRM programs?
- To what extent were CBDRM interventions effective and adequate?

Findings and Recommendations

Data suggest that USAID’s BHA-funded CBDRM programs have led to sustainable disaster risk management outcomes in the EAP region. Overall, CBDRM programs contributed to building the capacity of local partners, and CBDRM activities contributed to the improvement of government DRM policies. Two notable activities include **microfinance initiatives** and the improvement of **Early Warning Systems (EWS)** to better reach communities.

Evaluation findings led PPRI and ADPC to advance the following recommendations for improving CBDRM programming, building on existing strengths.

- **Consider encouraging systems and networks approaches to CBDRM.** Intentional consideration to the systems and networks of actors and interventions that influence CBDRM programming’s effectiveness is likely to be useful. Programs that can facilitate a multi-stakeholder or whole-of-society approach (e.g., engaging governments, communities, local NGOs) to reach out to a diverse range of stakeholders as well as the private sector by implementing partners is an explicit opportunity for expanding CBDRM.

Key Takeaways

Encourage systems and networks approaches – multi-stakeholder approach.

Integrate social inclusion factors including gender and more in program design and implementation.

Consider **independent portfolio evaluations** after implementation – **move from 3 to 5 years.**

Invite new methods of **data collection and analyses.**

Communicate CBDRM results to Mission colleagues and integrate such results in portfolio reviews.

- **Develop additional opportunities for implementing partners and local organizations, governments, and communities to learn from each other.**
Implementing partners learn from their own and their collaborators' successes and failures. Consider providing opportunities for organizations across BHA's CBDRM portfolio to learn from each other through dedicated fora, platforms, or learning events.
- **Incorporate efforts to influence policy into CBDRM programming.**
Concurrently, managing implementing partners', governments', donors', and communities' expectations that policy change requires longevity. Consider supporting longer-term CBDRM programming, especially in efforts toward recovery, risk reduction, and resilience which would provide more time to build on initial successes.
- **Consider programs that intentionally and systematically seek to enhance EWSs for persons with disabilities and residents in rural communities.**
Early warning systems must be able to reach individuals with visual or hearing impairments, along with mobility challenges, to ensure that no one is left behind during the process of evacuation. At the same time, some areas without consistent internet must also have access to EWS.
- **Integrate all social inclusion factors in the design and implementation of CBDRM programs and consider more robust and systematic ways to assess social inclusion.**
USAID's BHA can take steps to ensure that all awardees carefully design, implement, and evaluate CBDRM activities with considerations for all social inclusion factors. More resources may be dedicated toward contextual research to inform the integration of gender and social inclusion in CBDRM programs.
- **Invite new methods of data collection and data analysis to better capture learnings and social inclusion factors.**
Data collection must be regularly assessed, and the depth of the data being collected must be improved. The utilization of more qualitative data and ensuring social inclusion factors can be considered to a greater extent in data analysis. Adding more flexibility to survey questions is one way implementing partners can do this.
- **Conduct further investigation on the performance and impact of BHA-funded CBDRM programs.** USAID's BHA to consider carrying out further investigation into the perspectives of direct beneficiaries and local partners (government and community representatives). This would aim to assess on-the-ground impacts, validate key findings from partner interviews, and document the long-term impacts of BHA-funded CBDRM activities. This investigation will support USAID's BHA in shaping the direction, type, and nature of future CBDRM programming in the EAP region.
- **Consider independent portfolio evaluations of USAID's BHA-funded CBDRM program portfolio to be conducted after the implementation of program cycles.**
Consider investing in independent portfolio evaluations to be conducted after the implementation of USAID's BHA-funded CBDRM program cycles from three to five years. It is challenging to determine impact immediately following programs of 18 months to two years in length, the usual duration of USAID's BHA-funded CBDRM programs.
- **Communicate CBDRM results to Mission colleagues and integrate such results into Mission portfolio reviews.**
Where relevant, consider communicating CBDRM results to Mission colleagues via reporting and public outreach communications as well as integrating such results into Mission portfolio reviews. Moreover, further explanation and guidance on regional and country development strategies (including the RDSCS and CDCS, whenever these are available) may be provided to implementing partners.

Primary source for this policy brief: Madurapperuma, Sisira (PI); Stacey L. Connaughton (Co-PI); Kilian Murphy; Edwin Salonga; Kayla Gerdes; Nirmala Fernando; Nitisha Kaffe; Naomi Levine; Ryan Funkhouser; Prudence Mbah; Krista Kelley; Angela Lasso Jimenez; Janne Parviainen; Winifred Chen. 2023. Performance Evaluation of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Programs for USAID's BHA/East Asia and the Pacific Region. West Lafayette, IN: Long-term Assistance and Services for Research - Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE Consortium).

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF
COMMUNITY-BASED DISASTER RISK
MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOR USAID'S BHA/
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

Stacey Connaughton
sconnaug@purdue.edu

